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Preparing and Using Classroom Observations in Faculty Teaching Evaluations

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Preparing and Using Classroom Observations in Faculty Teaching Evaluations

10. Description of the session:

Assessment and evaluation of faculty teaching plays an important role in the success of the individual faculty, the department, and most of all, student learning. And yet, many chairs and deans of departments have had no formal training in observing, assessing, and evaluating teaching. As the education world becomes increasingly evidence driven, it is more crucial than ever to create appropriate and consistent faculty teaching observation models. There have been articles written which give how-to-survive advice to nervous faculty receiving peer evaluations (e. g. Perlmuter, 2011), and articles written which share insightful ways of using the peer evaluation process as a means to better teaching (e. g. Shearer, 2012). It seems most prudent to use the peer evaluation process as a means to improve teaching, which in turn, should improve learning. Peer evaluation should not be an excruciating process which a faculty must try to “survive.” It should be a beneficial, positive process that is supportive of all involved. There should be acceptance by the faculty in the creation, implementation, and process of peer review. This is easy to say, but not so simple to do. This process may be time consuming and contentious. However, if harmonious agreement can be found, it could be the foundation for a better, more useful peer evaluation process.

In this session, we will look at a model which: (1) helps the evaluator and faculty member to prepare for the observation; (2) provides the evaluator with a list of items to be observed, and (3) provides a look at what feedback and reflection is important after the observation. We will also discuss the importance of context specific observation and assessment, and the need for flexible assessment and evaluation. Attendees will have a chance to share their assessment and evaluation needs, any models they currently use, as well as their difficulties and success in the process.

Perlmutter, D. D., (2011). Pleasing the peers. *The Chronical of Higher Education*. Retrieved from <http://chronicle.com/article/Pleasing-the-Peers/129885>

Shearer, T. M., (2012). A Pleasing Observation. *The Chronical of Higher Education*. Retrieved from <http://chronicle.com/article/A-Pleasing-Observation/131074>